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Passed March 24 1825

W. S. H

Inaugural Essay on Rheumatismus acutus

by John R. Wise of Va.

March 10th 1825.

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Rheumatismus Acutus. Class Pyrexia order Phlegmasia of Cullen, who defines it to be a disease from an external and often evident cause, attended by Pyrexia, pains about the joints following the course of the muscles, fixing on the larger joints in preference to those of the feet and hands. increased by external heat.

It occurs most frequently in autumn and spring, when there are sudden vicissitudes of weather; but may happen at any season if those changes are for the time present.

Sometimes the pains take the precedency of the fever; but in other cases the fever appears first, and the local affection does not discover itself till a few days afterwards.

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The symptoms are the same as of fever from any other cause. such as cold chill. succeeded by a full, frequent and hard pulse. flushings of the face and partial heats; aversion to food, general lassitude, and depression of spirits, more or less of soreness and aching over different parts of the body. The tongue becomes coated with fur of a brownish hue, the thirst insatiable bowels costive, Urine scanty and high-coloured, depositing during the course of the disease a lateritious sediment. In the course of a short time pains are felt in different parts: most commonly the larger joints. the hips and knees of the lower, and shoulders and elbows of the upper extremities. we should recollect, however, that

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the smaller joints are not entirely free from its attacks; more especially the ancles and wrists.
The Pyrexia suffers an exacerbation every evening, which is most considerable during the night, at which time the Pains also are much aggravated, and exceedingly prone to shift from one joint to another.
The limb which is the immediate seat of the disease, sooner or later becomes affected with redness and swelling at the coming on of which Symptoms, there is most generally an abatement of the pain: but this does not invariably happen.
We are told by Cullen, that early in the course of this disease there is some sweating; but that it is seldom

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free or copious, and seldom either relieves the pain or proves critical.
Blood drawn in this disease exhibits an inflammatory or sizy appearance.
Rheumatism differs from common inflammation in this (viz) that it very rarely terminates in suppuration, or gangrene; some Authors have gone even so far as to affirm that it never does terminate in this manner; but this is contradicted by the observation of Dr. Good, who says, that, in one or two instances he himself had been willing to see extensive abscess. I have also seen a case of the same nature, which occured to my preceptor Dr John R Purnell of Maryland. here, it became necessary after trying by every possible means to bring about absorption of the pus

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is hard to believe. Indeed
difficulty can be found in
obtaining this made to realize;
the real number without the accounts
and the pattern published record.
Great diversity of opinion exists
relative to the most important
that is to be observed; some maintain
it to be stated in the sixth edition,
which others hold it to be stated
in the second known and relevant
editions multiplied. Thousands
will tell us, that the muscular
powers are alone applied. Probat
forces to "it is it to be an tri
tion is attached the muscular
powers behind." we can account
for the difference of opinion in

in the case. [illegible] by attention
is to the [illegible] of abnormities
in [illegible] the [illegible]
Attention of the [illegible].
A hereditary structure is allowed
by Vandamore as one of the remote
causes of the disease; but says "
it is obvious that the inference can
be drawn only from general
reasoning and not from direct evidence."
The fact, that, some physicians are
more liable than others to be affected,
when equally exposed to its exciting
causes, would seem to favor
such an opinion; though, this
may be referred to some peculiar
idiosyncrasy. A constitution indebted solely
for any hereditary predisposition.
The most common form of the disease.

with the application of cold to the whole, or part of the body, when unduly heated by exercise or fire-heat, wearing wet or moist clothes, or sitting in damp sheets; these, and other mis-conducts, internal injuries of any kind, may be enumerated as sometimes laying the foundation of this disease.

We now come to the consideration of the proximate cause, and here again we shall find great difference of opinion amongst writers. Under this heading the proximate cause to consist in a deposition of morbific matter in the lungs. This hypothesis I believe has been long abandoned

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[illegible] portained too much of the
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[illegible] power, that, and which
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[illegible] power in the [illegible],
and is therefore the author of the
[illegible] of [illegible], [illegible]
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[illegible] [illegible] to the [illegible]
[illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] with the [illegible],
which I [illegible] [illegible] to the
proximate cause of [illegible].
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in the [illegible]
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[illegible], which [illegible], to
the [illegible] of [illegible], [illegible] the

[illegible] [illegible] until the cause. On the capillaries, by which they are distended and engorged in such a manner as to render them unable to propel their contents; a stagnation of fluid takes place, because there is no power to resist the irritation. The irritation, once [illegible] being established, the continuance of the same produces an accumulation and undue determination of blood to the part thus affected. The diseases with which Rheumatism is most liable to be confounded are gout, venereal & syphilis, and great difficulty is sometimes experienced in distinguishing between these affections. The attending circumstances will generally show

to the [illegible] to [illegible] gout, the former [illegible] [illegible] more gradually, and [illegible] regularly marked exacerbations and its clear remission. It is also much less connected with [illegible] of dyspepsia, or disordered condition of the stomach; to which may be added the [illegible] with which it attacks the joints of the [illegible] and knees, which we all know is the most prominent seat of attack of the Gout.

As relative to the other diseases with which Rheumatism is apt to be confounded, we may generally arrive at a tolerably just regard of accuracy, by a minute investigation into the previous history and nature

of the patient.—

The disease sometimes terminates fatally under by metastasis, or translation of action to some vital part.—

Such cases are according rare in comparison with the great number affected, and such we may reasonably propitiate commencement of the disease.

The duration of an attack of rheumatism will depend in a measure on the mode of practice that is pursued, yet from sixteen of twelve days to four weeks.

Called to a case such as I have been treating, it may scarcely be at a loss, as to the order in which to be adopted, the consti-

[illegible] of blood is indubitable; and the propriety of its detraction will be clearly indicated, both by the good effects which it may have produced, and by the urgency of the disease, by its strong [illegible] and its rapid [illegible] and accumulation advocates the propriety of bleeding in the mild state which should be adopted in the [illegible]. In a dissertation treatise on the Epidemic diseases from the year 1775 to 1780 he appears to recommend the practice of taking away blood to prevent, as he had before been in the habit of recommending. On a subsequent occasion however he still appears partial to the practice of bleeding.

Feingle

Pringle, on the account of the disease of the [illegible], also informs us of the successful treatment of acute rheumatism by repeated bleedings.

By Cullen blood letting is considered the chief remedy of acute rheumatism "the blood must be taken (days in large quantities, and the bleeding is to be repeated, in proportion to the frequency, fulness, and hardness of the pulse, but to the violence of the pain."

The plan of making bleeding being not to induce chronic rheumatism, seems to me to be a most rational foundation, for I believe, that when the acute is changed into chronic rheumatism, it is caused rather by debility, than want of blood letting.

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[illegible] the [illegible] [illegible]
remedy in the management
of this disease.

Cathartics are also very serviceable
in the early stage of the disease.
Under their operation, the cerebral
become moderated and the febrile
symptoms abated. The mixed
[illegible] recommended by authors
on the ground, that, they do
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the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
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fact or not, I am unable to [illegible]
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when he says, that "in proportion as the people [illegible] practice are a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] in the [illegible], then
[illegible] attack is followed with
[illegible] fever, and great
debilitation of the; it is
due to the [illegible] one.
Other essential fever and general
excitement have been [illegible]
reduced by the above mentioned
remedies, we may then and
resource to tonics; these
are medicines which promote the
natural secretions from the
surface of the body, for [illegible]
[illegible] powder in combination
with Calomel and the tartrate
of antimony is an excellent formula.
The hourly [illegible] of one or two
grains of [illegible] and one
or twelve of nitric acid to use

an excellent diaphoretic powder, we must not fail to mention the Dover's powder: this is well adapted to the secondary stages of the disease, when vascular excitement has been sufficiently reduced by measures previously pointed out: it is recommended that the patient should be kept up in the sitting posture, for at least an hour and twenty four hours. Many other diaphoretics might be, indeed, used — as most of them are of a stimulating, we shall not recur to them and in a similar way Dover's little difference of opinion exists as to the use of the Peruvian Bark in acute Rheumatism, whilst one set of practitioners, most highly

extol it, there are others, who utterly condemn its use in the early or inflammatory stage, among those who speak favorably of it, may be mentioned the names of Haggarth, Fothergill and Saunders. The former of whom (i.e. Haggarth) goes so far as to say that "Bark in Rheumatism is only inferior to Mercury in Syphilis." I have never seen the medicine tried in the early or inflammatory stage, but should suppose it injurious, and with professor Chapman I should say "that generally speaking it is best suited to the Convalescence, to recruit strength and confirm recovery."

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Local inoculations, as and leeches are of great service in the cure of the disease, and may be employed when general bleeding from the cause is inadmissible, or as an auxiliary to it. They should never be neglected, if the pain, and inflammation are severe.
After the inflammation has been reduced by the remedies formerly pointed out, we shall find the application of a blister to the parts of much benefit. As a local remedy the Datura stramonium has been recommended: the leaves treated in brandy, and applied to the limb, is the best mode of application. it is said that it sometimes affords

much relief.
When all the remedies above enumerated have failed to give relief, it is recommended to resort to the use of Mercury with a view to salivation as a dernier ressort. The probriety of this measure has been doubted by Cazenave, a writer in the diseases of long standing, he says that "though Mercury takes place among the greatest substances, it never failed to aggravate and protract the complaints when it touched the mouth." In this I must disagree with him, having witnessed its beneficial effects so very frequently in the practice of the Pennsylvania Dispensary, where every other remedy had failed.
We are told by professor Lagmann

Cases are sometimes occur, when the disease will not yield until the mouth is touched; and to recommend a radical cure the mercurial intoxication must be continued for a considerable period.
When the disease is removed and nothing, but its effects remain the various tones become prominent as Dart, Mineral acids, Mercurial preparations &c &c the stiffness of the limb, which sometimes follows, is to be overcome by exercise, and friction.
The prophylactic management consist in the employment of those measures, which are calculated to strengthen the body, and rectify it against the inroads of the

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agents which are most instrumental in the production of the disease. I need hardly mention that wearing flannel next the skin especially during the winter season is of great importance.
The diet should be of the most simple, and abstemious kind, such as barly water, rice water, currant jelly, dissolved in water, and other bland articles. Animal food in all cases should be strictly forbidden.

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Acute Rheumatism

No 27 Damon St.

Willie Jones

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